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EVIL CONFRONTED

BY

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Christian pacifists have been called many hard names, such as "misty optimists," "idealists," "perfectionists," "utopians," "shirkers," "cowards,"[1] and what not.[2] But no name has been harder to bear, nor more ill-deserved than that of "appeasers," as if pacifists were so indifferent to moral considerations that they stood in the same camp with the pre-war politicians who were prepared in their opportunism to make friends with Tojo, Mussolini, and Hitler, whilst Manchuria, Abyssinia, and Czechoslovakia were trampled under foot in bloody massacre.

Reinhold Niebuhr, for instance, himself once a pacifist, has said that pacifists often "praise the peace of tyranny as if it were nearer to the peace of the Kingdom of God than war."[3] If this were true of Christian Pacifism it would be condemned from the start. The fact is that it has been true and still is true of *certain types* of Christian pacifism, as it has been true and still is true of certain Christians who are non-pacifists. It was in a large measure true of the type of pacifism with which Niebuhr was himself best acquainted. It was an utopian type which held an optimistic view of human nature, denied the radical nature of sin, ignored the relativities of history, based itself on the ethics of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, and had no deep theological roots. Niebuhr claims that it was shattered by the emergence of diabolical evil in "world rulers," which gave the lie to nineteenth-century optimism and utopianism.

On the other hand, Niebuhr, unlike so many other anti-pacifists, is realistic enough to denounce all those who try to find support for war in the ethic of Jesus by juggling with such texts as, "I came not to bring peace, but a sword," and "He that hath no sword, let him sell his cloke and buy a sword." For him, the ethic of Jesus is absolute and uncompromising: "Those of us who regard the ethic of Jesus as finally and ultimately normative, but as not immediately applicable to the task of securing justice in a sinful world, are very foolish if we try to reduce the ethic so that it will cover and justify our prudential and relative

[1] That some pacifists are cowards may be quite true and equally true that some non-pacifists are cowards; but that pacifists as such are cowards is manifestly untrue. See *Human Guinea-pigs* by Dr. K. Mellanby (Gollancz).

[2] For some of these names see *Why the Christian Church is not Pacifist* by Reinhold Niebuhr.

[3] *Why the Christian Church is not Pacifist*, p. 26.

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standards and strategies."[1] What then is the function of this absolutist ethic of Jesus, which involves non-resistance, in a sinful world where it is impossible to put it into practice?

It would appear that it has no more than negative uses. It serves (*a*) to show the measure of our failure, (*b*) to act as the ultimate criterion of our achievements, (*c*) to provide a principle of discriminate criticism.[2] We may agree with Niebuhr that the Kingdom of God in all its fullness is beyond history, that it awaits the consummation of history. But does this necessarily deny progress in any sense of the word? Does it necessarily mean that war, the stupidity of which is acknowledged on every hand, will *never* be abolished, as slavery was abolished by Christian action? That Niebuhr has some doubts here is seen by the fact that he allows a distinct value to pacifism within the Christian Church and admits that it is not heretical.[3] In fact, a pacifist witness is a necessity within the Christian Church: "A Church which does not generate it is poorer for its lack."[4] Further, he is clear that no nation's cause, however righteous, can be identified with God's cause.[5]

I

This raises the question as to whether Niebuhr's view of the function of the ethic of Jesus is really sound. There is no possibility of separating the ethic of Jesus from who Jesus is. If He was not the revelation of God and had no different authority from that of any other great teacher, then we are at liberty to make pragmatic judgements on what He taught, to pick and choose and lay aside at will. But if He was "God manifest in the flesh," then we have no such liberty. Our only liberty is to exercise our critical faculty on the tradition so that we may be certain of the content of the ethic. This, as I understand him, is Niebuhr's position, as it is mine.

We must, however, accept the full implications of the position. If we cannot have the ethic apart from the Man, neither can we have the Man apart from the ethic. The ethic expresses the Spirit

[1] *Why the Christian Church is not Pacifist*, p. 16. See also pp. 15, 32. See also his criticism of Brunner in *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, p. 167. See also pp. 234, 244 for a denunciation of invoking religion in support of national war efforts.

[2] See Dr. G. H. C. Macgregor's analysis in *The Relevance of the Impossible*, pp. 22, 23.

[3] *Why the Christian Church is not Pacifist*, p. 11.

[4] *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, p. 198. [5] Ibid, pp. 234, 244.

of Christ and reveals the character of God. If it is not to be practised, and is indeed impracticable, then Christ Himself and His passion and death become equally irrelevant in the kind of world that He lived in and that we live in (as indeed many people believe them to be). Both have relevance only for an ideal world other than one of flesh and blood. Christianity then falls under the judgement of being no more than a celestial soporific. This would be far from Niebuhr's desires, but I cannot but feel that should his conception of the function of the Christian ethic become popular, it would lead to a further resurgence of that type of pietistic Christianity which is sound in doctrine but knows little of the Spirit of Christ.

So much of Niebuhr's understanding of the world situation and his doctrine of man is right. We owe him a great debt for having awakened us from the slumber of easy-going optimism and utopianism, which is positively dangerous, providing a sure way for the gangster to gain a foothold and eventually to plunge the world in darkness. Both pacifist and non-pacifist must recognize the radical nature of sin; the *difficulty* of implementing an absolutist ethic in a *fallen* world; the fact that the Kingdom of God is not *wholly* realizable within the bounds of history, and has its fulfilment beyond history; and the further fact that evil can, in its corporate nature, assume colossal proportions, so that the Christian witness faced with it *seems* utterly impotent and unable to deal with it. But does this mean that we *are* utterly impotent, that we are bound hand and foot like Lazarus? Does it mean that as pacifists we are bound to " praise the peace of tyranny as if it were nearer the peace of the Kingdom of God than war," that " the pacifist who would accept tyranny rather than take life is involved in as great a compromise as the Christian who would take life rather than accept tyranny," as a friend of mine once put it to me?

We may accept the charge of compromise at once and admit that we are all involved in it as a necessity of historical existence, and with this I will deal below. But is there not something left out of this Niebuhrian understanding of man, of society, and of the Christian ethic? There are three things left out. First, there is no real doctrine of the Holy Spirit. This is a significant omission in most that Niebuhr has given us, and it is found also in Barth and Brunner. Second, there is failure to understand the essential *apocalyptic* nature of the Christian ethic, with its notions of " fulfilled time," " ripe time," and " realized eschatology," involving the possibility of the transcendence of a relative

situation in the movement of history. Third, there is failure to recognize the distinction between two kinds of compromise, the "compromise of necessity" which is involved in all historical existence, and the "compromise of choice" which has no element of necessity about it, though it may involve sacrifice.

II

As to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, I have searched Niebuhr's *Nature and Destiny of Man* in vain for any association of grace with the Holy Spirit such as we find in the New Testament. Grace, for him, is *forgiveness* and almost forgiveness alone. Everywhere in the New Testament grace is more than this; it is also *power*. Paul could speak of "His power which worketh in me mightily,"[1] and could pray to be "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man."[2] Whoever is in Christ Jesus is a "new creation," and, in its corporate capacity, the Spirit-filled fellowship of the Church is capable of "removing mountains." The New Testament has no false optimism about man, *qua* man, no illusions about the radical nature of sin and evil; nevertheless, it is unique in the literature of the first century (a century overcome with pessimism and defeatism) in bubbling over with joy and hope. And it is so because the writers are conscious that a new Power *has come into the world* to transform it. This Power is none other than the grace of God which is manifested by the Holy Spirit in the Christian community.

The history of Christianity is full of the triumphs of the Spirit in spite of the many other things which are there. We may begin with the Acts of the Apostles: "Ye shall receive *power* when the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Not far on we meet with this: "He looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." Who can estimate what new *power* came into the world through the faithful testimony and martyrdom of Stephen? We have to think of the conversion of Saul, and of the literal changing of the map of Europe, and indeed of the map of the world, which came out of it.

These are but the first of a long line of martyrs extending through the ages, who by their witness to the Christian truth that love ("powerless power," in Berdyaev's phrase) is supreme and mightier than the sword, have transformed life in one area

[1] Colossians i. 29. [2] Ephesians iii. 16.

or another and have proved themselves to be greater builders of real human society than statesmen or heroes. It was an obscure Christian deacon who, by interposing himself between two gladiatorial contestants, secured the banishing of this barbarous entertainment from later Roman civilization. The Dark Ages are by no means so dark as they have often been painted. We think of men like St. Patrick, St. Ninian, St. Columba, St. Boniface and a host of others who risked the terrible hardships of their time to reach barbarian and semi-barbarian hosts, armed with no other weapon than the Gospel of peace. William Penn and Roger Williams in New England are but other examples, and judging from the practical results which came from their efforts, one could hardly dare to call them mere visionaries. Over and over again the seemingly impossible has been accomplished.

One does not deny that, with weapons which look so utterly useless before the might of armed force, such a way is bound to involve suffering and even death; but is the way of war and strife any less costly? Part of the tragedy of war, and some would say the major part, is not just the suffering and bloodshed which it involves, the wanton destruction which it brings in its train, but the moral collapse which inevitably follows it; and, however futile the way of the Cross may appear to be, it does not bring this calamity.

It may be asked, "Do you really believe that the spirit of Christ, in defenceless and fearless opposition to evil, could avert tyranny?" Admittedly, this is a difficult question and there are times (like 1939) when it appears that the only answer is "No! certainly not." But the question ought to have been asked before 1939. Yet, even so, the answer is "Yes." It would not, of course, avert it in the same way as war would avert it. The pattern of history would certainly take on a different shape. It might, and almost certainly would, take a longer time and spread suffering over a longer period, though it is doubtful if the total amount of suffering would be greater. But one thing it would certainly achieve. It would leave behind no aftermath of spiritual and moral rot in which the seeds of the next war might grow up. But such a spirit would have to be shown by the whole company of the faithful who name the Name of Christ across every national barrier.

Again, it might be asked, "Is the analogy of Christ upon the Cross perfect? He was not holding back a terrific onslaught of violence on His nation. He attacked social and spiritual evil and bore the enemy's retaliation on His own person. Surely, that

is a different situation?" This is true enough on one level, but it is not the whole truth if He was what He claimed to be. He was then revealing the way God takes with evil, and the way God wills to take with evil through the Church which is "the body of Christ." It is when the Church is faithless that evil triumphs in one way or another. Even when the faithless way appears to bring quick returns in establishing freedom over against tyranny, is it truly freedom or is it not a deeper bondage to evil which will yet show itself in the years ahead? A Christian attitude which neglects the power of the Holy Spirit, the *power* of grace, will regard the Christian ethic as an "impossible possible," that is, as an *ideal* which can never in any sense be achieved. But an attitude which takes fully into account the power of the Holy Spirit will regard the Christian ethic as a "possible impossible," that is, as a *reality* beyond mere human achievement, but not beyond the achievement of God through a faithful Church. The Church is not set in the world to achieve a *mundane* "possible," but to achieve a *heavenly* "impossible," in other words she is set in the world to work "the works of God."

III

As to the apocalyptic nature of the Christian ethic, it is more and more understood by New Testament scholars that there is no understanding of the New Testament without grappling with the Jewish eschatological notions on which it is based.[1] For the Jew, eternity and time were not opposites as they were for the Greek. Consequently, their view of history and of historical event was entirely different from that of the Greek. "There is generally a distinct cleavage of thought between the Hellenic view which takes historical process as shadow-show, real only so far as it reflects eternal truth, and the Hebraic view that it is real in its own right as a direct working out of God's purpose, so that in some way time is necessary to eternity."[2] For the Jew and the Christian, eternity could be realized *in time*. There were moments when an "eternal now" struck down into the time process, "ripe" or "fulfilled" times, times when a relative situation between a greater and a lesser evil was so transcended that what

[1] The word "apocalypse" means "revelation," which has reference, in the Biblical sense, not to communicated information, but to action, to "breaking in," something of God penetrating history from beyond history, often with unexpected suddenness. Eschatology is simply the doctrine of "last things," and has to do with the relationship of time to eternity, and therefore with ultimate purpose and ultimate destiny.

[2] Professor A. D. Ritchie in *Civilization, Science and Religion*, p. 54.

was before a relevant ethical question became wholly irrelevant.[1] This is related in the New Testament to the Church as "the remnant" and as "leaven" (an explosive material) transforming the environment. The Christian does not think of progress as a graded uphill track, but as a series of crisis-events in which the power of God is seen to work mightily, and God is able to make even "the wrath of man to praise him."[2] Nevertheless, the Christian does think of progress in the bringing of social and political behaviour nearer to the ethic which lies at the heart of the Gospel.

This is a difficult subject because we are, in the main, the inheritors of the Greek notion of ethical working and of progress, and have lost touch with the Biblical notion. I have only space to touch upon it briefly. I may illustrate by saying that there was such a "ripe time" between 1929 and 1931 when, if a more Christian way had been taken, the whole shape of world history would have been different: "If thou hadst known in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace!" But we did not know. We were blinded by selfishness (which is always what blinds us) and refused to take a way of sacrifice which eventually would have left behind it a soil from which good would have sprung. The result was that we were plunged into a way which involved a far greater measure of sacrifice, but a sacrifice of a kind which has left behind it a soil of another sort. It is difficult to assess blame in such a matter without raising national animosities, which is the last thing I wish to do. But no major nation of Western Civilization, all of which claim to be Christian in some sense, can escape blame in this matter; and the Church as a whole, which cuts across national barriers, must bear a large share of the blame. That such an "open door" will appear again in the pattern of history is certain; Christianity has no concern with a static *nemesis*. My concern is that when it comes we should not again be so blind.

As to the distinction between "inevitable compromise" and "deliberate compromise," Niebuhr has done good service in showing that historical existence itself involves compromise.[3]

[1] For a fuller working out of this see my *Pacifism in the Old Testament, and Afterwards*, pp. 23–27.

[2] *Psalm* lxxvi. 10.

[3] A good example is the fact that during the recent war all pacifists were involved in "inevitable compromise." It was impossible to *live* in the country without being involved in the war. But, deeper than this, there are historical situations in which an absolute ethical maxim cannot be fully realized in a concrete situation without compromise. We are constantly being involved in the tension between the ideal and the practical.

But this by no means requires us to conclude that *every* ethical choice is one between a lesser and a greater evil. It may be a choice between good and evil in which no element of compromise is involved in choosing the good. The idea that there is no ethical situation in which we can choose the good without involving others in lesser or greater evil would make nonsense of the Christian ethic. Neither is it true that there is no way out of the impasse presented by the choice between a lesser and a greater evil, except to choose the lesser evil. There is often a "third alternative." It may be a very costly alternative, as was the Cross[2] but it is there to be taken; and the Christian believes with deathless certainty that the way of the Cross is the way which he must take in overcoming evil of any kind. He is not to be scared off by the seeming futility of the way, by the contention that it is not *practicable*, for he knows that its practicability is often greater than anyone would suppose, that its "idealism" is often the truest form of "realism." But, apart altogether from such considerations of expediency, the Christian is under compulsion from the unique revelation of God in Christ. As Professor G. H. C. Macgregor has said: "If Jesus were no more than a great teacher of ethics—possibly the world's greatest—then Niebuhr's case is unanswerable. But if He is indeed the Son of God? If the Church is His Body and we 'members in particular'? If in His Word we have a unique revelation of God's will? If by His Spirit we are empowered to obedience?"[1] Yes! what then?

[1] *The Relevance of the Impossible*, p. 58.

[2] I would be the last to assert that the life and death of Jesus were *mere* political events. But they were political events, and the Cross has its political significance. Dr. C. H. Dodd has reminded us of the political significance of the life and death of Jesus: "We should observe that the situation into which Jesus Christ came was genuinely typical. The forces with which He came into contact were such as are permanent factors in history: government (in Pilate and the Sanhedrin), institutional religion (in the Pharisees), nationalism (in the Zealots), social unrest (in the poor and dispossessed of Galilee). That is to say, they were the stuff of our historical situation" (*The Christian News-Letter*, Supplement No. 31). Neither must we separate the Cross from the ministry of Jesus of which it is but the culmination. He came to bring the Kingdom of God, and the Kingdom of God is never completely fulfilled until "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." In my understanding of the ministry, Jesus was conscious of this from the moment of His baptism and temptation in the wilderness. To start with, His country was "occupied territory." There were two attitudes which He could have taken up: (*a*) that of a "collaborator," (*b*) that of a Zealot. It is significant that among the Twelve there was a "collaborator" (Matthew) and a Zealot (Simon) whom He taught to live in a fellowship which transcended their differences. He Himself took neither way. His greater temptation seems to have been to take the way of the Zealot, the way of power. "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Here was a temptation indeed! Jesus wanted the kingdoms of this world. But before Him stands

IV

We may now return to the accusation that the Christian pacifist often "praises the peace of tyranny as if it were nearer the peace of the Kingdom of God than war," and to the contention that "the pacifist who would accept tyranny rather than take life is involved in as great a compromise as the Christian who would take life rather than accept tyranny." As I have said, we may admit the compromise and that it is involved in both the pacifist and non-pacifist attitudes, as the contention allows. It is of the nature of "inevitable compromise" and there is no way of avoiding it in the sinful situation in which we exist. But there can be little doubt that the situation has been produced to a large extent by the failure of the Christian Church in all countries, in past ages, to bear its true witness. Unless at some point a sufficient number of Christians contract out by a refusal of "deliberate compromise," the entail never can be broken. The situation will grow worse, not better.

Naturally, the critic of pacifism looks back to the days before the recent war, when gangster dictators were allowed to commit their barbarities unmolested. It is the fashion of many to blame the pacifist spirit, which had grown amongst Christians in this country and in America, for Hitler's unrestrained rampagings. Whilst there is some truth in this contention, it is far from being the whole truth. Many things are so easily forgotten. The situation was much more complex than this simple understanding would allow for.

Is it remembered that some of those, including at least one leading newspaper magnate, who were most loyal and bellicose as soon as war had broken out, were amongst those who, from the occupation of Manchuria onwards, were most anxious to destroy the League of Nations? Is it remembered that the policy of non-intervention in the Spanish civil war was not a pacifist piece of machinery, but a studied piece of "political

the way of redeeming love (the third alternative). That way is the *via dolorosa*, and at the end stands the Cross, horrible in its associations and in its finality. Here is another way: the way of stark-naked power, of all that is evil and unredeeming. Time enough to talk of love when the reins are in His hands! Here is a quicker and more effective way! The temptation is so subtle! How easily *we* fall for it, not realizing that in doing so we saw off the branch on which we are sitting! We dismiss some scruple, because it seems the only way out which is workable and will perhaps involve less suffering in the long run; and we are fully persuaded that after it is over we will return to the path of rectitude and love with a very real advantage, only to find that, having gone so far we must go further, and that, not only have our moral standards suffered, but our whole personality has deteriorated. True, we never intended it to be, and there are all kinds of ways in which we can justify our action, even logical and moral ways. But it is so nevertheless.

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realism?" Does anyone doubt that as far back as the treacherous occupation of Manchuria the matter could have been prevented by the *moral* authority of the peace-loving nations, especially if America had not pursued her isolationist policy?[1] Do we forget that a considerable number of politicians in this country most definitely regarded the rise of Hitler as a safeguard against Bolshevism? Was pacifism responsible for the collapse of France, or was it political treachery and moral decay? It was not Christian pacifists (though there were a number), but Christian non-pacifists and the host of profane men who rejoiced at the Munich agreement in those days of the late summer of 1938 when we were all digging trenches.

If we are to be realistic, we must take into account all the political factors which began to assert themselves in every country after 1918, and which prepared the ground in Germany for the seed of Nazi ascendancy. We must look at American isolationism, supported by masses of Christians in the U.S.A.; Austrian and German inflation, definitely fostered by the victors; reparations; world fear of Bolshevism, by which masses of Christians in Germany and elsewhere were deceived into adopting Nazi ideology, and which is again already becoming a potent slogan; and so on.

If Christians everywhere had been wide-awake and morally alert, would not the rot have been stopped before it had gone too far, and the inevitable holocaust of terror and bloodshed have been avoided? Some of us saw quite clearly where it was leading long before 1930, but little heed was taken of our warnings. To represent the Christian pacifist as morally indifferent or as guilty of political chicanery is absurd. His action may look like that of the collaborator, as the action of our Lord must have appeared to the Zealots of His day, but it is nothing of the kind. He does not "*praise* the peace of tyranny" any more than he praises war. He knows them both to be evil things and abhorrent to the Kingdom of God; but he does not believe that one can be exterminated by the other. "Satan cannot cast out Satan." It is fashionable now to regard the period between the two great wars as no more than an "armed peace," an armistice. It will be as fashionable in twenty years time or perhaps less, to regard 1945–1965 in a similar way, *unless there is a radical*

[1] In the *Daily Telegraph*, March 16th, 1946, Mr. Winston Churchill is reported as having said in New York: "I was an old champion of the League of Nations, and I believe that up to 1935 war could have been averted by decisive action on the part of the League in accordance with what mankind had agreed on."

change of outlook. And where is that radical change and the power to enable it to come from, unless from the faith of the Christian which to the world appears as foolishness?

It is not true that pacifists have no policy except to capitulate to tyranny. As Professor G. H. C. Macgregor says: "For twenty years between two wars Christian pacifists in season and out of season urged a positive policy based not merely on 'appeasement' at the expense of weaker peoples, but on genuine national sacrifices on the part of the powers best placed to make them. Such a policy, if adopted before the demonic powers of evil had become enthroned in the high places of Europe, would almost certainly have saved the peace."[1] Far from being "idealistic" the pacifist policy is most truly "realistic," and at any rate it does not confuse pragmatic with ethical argument. Dr. Inge has drawn a careful distinction between "*knowing* one's duty" and "*doing* one's duty." "The question, 'What is my duty?' often requires careful consideration, and our decision must be relevant to circumstances. But the question, 'If I know my duty, why should I do it?' admits of no answer except, 'Because it is your duty.' We are here in contact with an ultimate, which in this case speaks in the imperative mood."[2]

It is this "imperative mood" which the Christian pacifist obeys when he refuses to take part in war and when he argues for political action which will prevent war. And he can hardly be called an idle dreamer in declaring that mankind must either abolish war or perish; for now the scientists who have been associated with the atomic bomb seem to be saying the same thing.[3] This, of course, is not the sole Christian pacifist argument for refusing to take part in war, but it serves to show that his contention is not so stupid as it is sometimes made out to be.

V

Finally, it is often argued that if all peoples outside Germany or even all Christians, had held pacifist views and acted on them, Hitler would have conquered the world and we should *all* have been under tyranny. This sounds very convincing, but I wonder if it is as convincing as it sounds! Christians and people in general did not so act, and we have had six years of war with its

[1] *The Relevance of the Impossible*, p. 83. [2] *The Fall of the Idols*, p. 243.

[3] Professor M. L. E. Oliphant was reported in the *Birmingham Mail*, November 3rd, 1945, as saying: "Stop war, or perish."

terrible toll of life, money and resources; so terrible in money and resources as to stagger the imagination. One is tempted to ask: "Could it have been worse?" No doubt it would have been longer, but in the end all tyranny is self-defeating.[1] I wonder which country suffered more: Denmark which offered no violent resistance, or Holland which took the opposite course? Both abhorred Nazism equally. Who knows what would have happened if a major nation had taken the way of non-resistance, whilst unmistakably showing its abhorrence of Nazi ideology and action? No less an authority than Dr. Inge admits, "The notion of a martyr-nation, giving itself up to injustice and spoliation for the most sacred of all causes, cannot be dismissed with contempt."[2]

The spectacle of the Christian Church in the first three centuries, faced with the persecuting might of Rome, armed only with her faith and the "good news" about love and righteousness is no myth. By the close of the first century the battle is on: "And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads . . . and upon his heads the names of blasphemy . . . And the dragon (Satan) gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority . . . . And they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? and who is able to war with him? And he was allowed to utter great blasphemies and to exert authority."[3] How like our situation from 1933 onwards! Listen to a nameless Christian forty or so years later. He is speaking of Christians: "Do you not see them thrown to wild beasts, that they may be persuaded to deny the Lord, and yet not overcome? Do you not see that the more of them that are punished, the greater becomes the number of the rest? This does not seem to be the work of man: this is the power of God."[4] The Empire had either to destroy Christianity or to come to terms with it. It was faced with a power of a different sort from that of might of arms. Professor A. D. Ritchie can say of Christianity, less than two hundred years on, that it "was the one really living thing within the Empire."[5] The struggle was over, the victory won, and it lay not with the might of arms, but with the "good news" of love and righteousness, with the army

[1] There is the further point that it is too readily assumed that victory brings peace and the cessation of the horrors of war; but already we are aware that this is not so. In the autumn of 1945, Sir John Boyd Orr declared that the number of people who would die in Central Europe in the winter 1945–6 would be more than all the casualties of the six years of war.

[2] *The Fall of the Idols*, p. 201.

[3] *Revelation* xiii. 1–5 (modern translation).

[4] *Epistle to Diognetus*, c. vii.

[5] *Civilization, Science, and Religion*, p. 90.

which had been shod with the "gospel of peace."[1] It was a Gospel which was "no mere earthly invention . . . nor a mere human system of opinion, but one which declared that truly God Himself, who is almighty, the Creator of all things, the invisible, had sent from heaven and placed among men the Truth, and the holy and incomprehensible Word . . . not for the purpose of exercising tyranny and inspiring fear and terror, but coming in clemency and meekness . . . as seeking to persuade and not to compel; for violence has no place in the character of God."[2]

Have we not the same Gospel? Or, has it lost its power? Or, is it that our faith is so weak that we lack the courage to put it into action? Do we really believe that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God stronger than men"?[3]

[1] It is true, of course, that in the long peace before the final persecution, which began under Diocletian in A.D. 303 and lasted for ten years, the Church had become in many ways corrupt; and it is true that "the peace" which came with the Edict of Milan in A.D. 313 was a further danger to the Church in lowering its standards towards the standards of the Empire, as events soon proved. But this does not invalidate the facts as I have stated them. It only shows how much easier it is for Christians to become corrupt in times of ease and prosperity than in times of adversity. "Beware when all men shall speak well of you." May we not justly claim that a similar kind of corruption has eaten into the vitals of the Church during the long era of peace which it has enjoyed in modern civilization? Hence our insensitiveness to so much of vital Christianity which has relation to social, economic and political matters.

[2] *Epistle to Diognetus*, c. vii. [3] *I Corinthians* i. 25.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION is composed of men and women of the various Churches, and of others not connected with any Church who believe :—

that Love, as revealed and interpreted in the life and death of Jesus Christ, involves more than we have yet seen, that it is the only power by which evil can be overcome, and the only sufficient basis of human society;

that, in order to establish a world-order based on Love, it is incumbent upon those who believe in this principle to accept it fully both for themselves and in their relation to others, and to take the risks involved in doing so in the world which does not as yet accept it.

The Fellowship seeks in the name of Christ to reconcile one with another people of every class and nation. It is the aim of the Fellowship to state positively and constructively the message of reconciliation, and not to spend itself in mere protest. All that the "ministry of reconciliation" demands it does not yet see, but it believes it must endeavour to apply unflinchingly Christ's revolutionary principle of Love, however unpractical it may appear under present conditions.

The "F.o.R." in Britain is part of a world-wide movement, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, with a large membership in U.S.A. and smaller groups in other countries and an office at 38 Gordon Square, London, W.C. 1.

Members of the F.o.R. are thus united in a spiritual fellowship with those in all lands who hold that as followers of Christ they are committed to this endeavour after a way of life inspired throughout by Love, and that they are called to a common quest after an order of society in accordance with the mind of Christ.

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